



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Learning About Hand-Foot Syndrome From Chemotherapy

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Hand-foot syndrome is a side effect of certain kinds of chemotherapy. Some common chemotherapy medicines used to treat cancer can cause short-term damage to the skin cells and tiny blood vessels in your hands and feet.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms can occur on your skin, most often on the palms of your hands and the soles of your feet. These symptoms may include:

- Pain.
- Redness.
- Swelling.
- Tingling or burning.
- Tenderness.

Severe cases can cause the skin to crack, peel, or have blisters. Symptoms can sometimes occur in other areas, such as the knees or elbows, but this is less common.

Hand-foot syndrome can make it hard to use your hands and feet to do daily activities. Symptoms usually go away after chemotherapy treatment is finished.

How is hand-foot syndrome treated?

To treat hand-foot syndrome, your doctor may recommend lowering the dose or changing the schedule of your chemotherapy. In some cases, chemotherapy may be stopped until the symptoms get better.

Medicines may be used to help relieve symptoms. They include:

- Medicines you put on your skin to reduce inflammation, such as corticosteroid creams.
- Medicines you put on your skin for pain. These may be given as a cream or a patch on the skin.
- Pills for pain or inflammation, such as ibuprofen or naproxen.
- Moisturizing creams. Your doctor may prescribe a cream or recommend an over-the-counter (OTC) cream.

Placing ice packs or a cool, wet towel under your hands and feet when you get certain chemotherapy medicines may help. Always put a towel between the ice pack and your skin. Talk to your doctor about this treatment.

How can you care for yourself at home?

You can do things at home to relieve your symptoms and keep them from getting worse.

To help protect your skin:

- Don't expose your hands and feet to hot water. Take cool showers and baths instead of using hot water. Rinse dishes in lukewarm water. When you dry your hands and feet, pat your skin gently with a cloth or towel.
- Avoid being exposed to the sun for long periods of time. And avoid other sources of heat, such as saunas.
- Don't do activities that cause rubbing or put force on your hands and feet, such as tennis or jogging.
- Avoid using household tools that rub against your hands, such as screwdrivers or garden tools.
- Avoid contact with household cleaning products, such as laundry detergent.
- Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothes and shoes.
- Try to avoid walking barefoot. Wear soft slippers with non-slip bottoms around the house.

To help soothe your skin:

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- Cool the palms of your hands and soles of your feet with ice packs or cool water. Do this for about 15 minutes at a time. Put a towel between the ice pack and your skin.
- Gently apply skin care lotion to keep your hands moist. Avoid rubbing or massaging lotion into your hands. This can cause friction.

Be sure to let your doctor know about any new symptoms or changes in your skin.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>

Enter **U479** in the search box to learn more about "**Learning About Hand-Foot Syndrome From Chemotherapy.**"

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